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ABSTRACT

Based on the view that the group orientation to multicultural education reinforces group stereotyping and seldom allows acknowledgement of diverse children's unique capabilities and differences or helps children build self-identity while learning to appreciate others, this paper presents and discusses contemporary cultures of young children's lives relative to a notion of "lived" early childhood curriculum that is developmentally and culturally conscious. Using an ethnographic and heuristics perspective, the life stories and schooling experiences of five young children were synthesized to convey the contemporary cultures of young children and families. The resulting vignettes with contextual information and the researcher's heuristics were analyzed from the perspectives of developmentally and culturally appropriate practice, cultural pluralism, critical pedagogy, and emancipatory knowledge. The paper highlights these vignettes to argue that the predominant view of multiculturalism incorporating an everlasting power struggle no longer provides a congruent intellectual framework for appreciating young children's current and future living and learning situations. Young children are shown to exhibit a capability of deconstructing power issues in a peaceful and empowering fashion. A model of cultural complexity in early childhood education incorporating awareness of social and cultural pluralism, critical pedagogy, and emancipatory knowledge in order to value multiple perspectives is presented. The paper advocates a "lived" curriculum that involves a "teachable moment" orientation, responding to each individual child's emerging interests, and promoting shared-power decisions and negotiations in learning and teaching. (Contains 76 references.) (KB)

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Cultural Complexity that Affects Young Children's Contemporary Growth, Change, and Learning

Eunsook Hyun, Ph.D.

Abstract

How do we see cultural complexity in young children's lives? Why should teachers embrace to cultural complexity in their practice? How does the "group orientation" truly support contemporary cultural complexity and pluralistic human "schooling?" What kind of intellectual framework is needed for teachers to maintain a lived curriculum that is developmentally and culturally conscious (thus, relevant and empowering) for all young children? The paper presents and discusses contemporary cultures of young children's lives relative to a notion of lived curriculum in early childhood education.

Young children's real life stories and schooling experiences are presented in this paper to convey the contemporary cultures of young children and families. Under the theoretical framework of ethnography and heuristics perspectives, over the last 13 years, people's stories (vignettes) were collected from naturalistic observations at variety settings in different states (CA, NV, LA, IL, NY, NH, PA, & FL). Five vignettes are introduced in this paper. Pseudonyms are used for each vignette.

Backgrounds: Schooling Groups

As long as human society depends upon and values the practice we have come to know as "schooling," we will continue to practice it as a crucial social activity, using teachers as critical agents in overseeing its functioning. As such, the initial preparation of teachers will remain crucial, and programs responsible for this preparation should acknowledge and welcome their fundamental responsibility for readying new teachers to reflectively experience and learn about themselves and the sea of human diversity they will encounter in schools and classrooms. When this consciousness becomes a part of pedagogical knowledge, skills, and

dispositions presented to new teachers they can be better equipped to engage curriculum that is more likely to lead to equal, fair and culturally congruent schooling experiences for all students.

One of the most profound aspects of U.S. education today is its cultural complexity. Since the late 1970s a massive literature and numerous programs have emerged dealing with teacher preparation for education that is "multicultural" (Banks, 1994a, 1994b; Gollinic & Chinn, 1998; Grant, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ramsey, 1987; Sleeter, 1991; Sleeter & Grant, 1999, 1994; Zeichner, 1993; 1981-82; Zeichner & Grant, 1998; Zeichner, & Liston, 1987; National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 1979, 1992, 1994, 1997, 2000). However, most related teacher education textbooks, materials and practices designed toward this end are based on a conventional understanding of multicultural education typically derived from an orientation toward human "grouping" (see, for example, Banks, 1994a, 1994b; Sleeter & Grant, 1994, 1999; Gollnic & Chinn, 1998). Such as, Sleeter and Grant's the five approaches to race, class, and gender; Gollinic and Chinn's groupings of class, ethnicity, race, gender, exceptionality, religion, language, age etc.

This group orientation usually portrays a view of pluralistic human society based on the issue of unequal positions of power in U.S. From this perspective, people's typical thinking and visual images of multiculturalism are shaped by group categories such as "at-risk," ethnicity, race, language, gender, social class, disability and exceptionally, religion, sexual orientation, and the like. Additionally, when materials and programs represent "education that is multicultural" from a social meliorist or a social reconstructionist perspective (Kliebard, 1995), they usually represent notions of power, struggle, and "equal opportunity" (e.g., Sleeter & Grant, 1994, 1999). Influenced by this perspective, school reform is engaged through actions such as desegregation,

affirmative action, racially balanced cooperative groups, "mainstreaming" and "inclusion," ESE classes, ESOL programs, and bilingual education to name a few.

As a result of these needed and important reforms, we have begun to acknowledge human diversity by identifying the varied identities and unique characteristics of specific groups of people and by re-visiting our democratic ideal of equity and cultural pluralism through schooling. A typical quote representing this group-oriented position regarding pluralistic multiculturalism might be the following:

> For cultural pluralism to be a reality, the nation would recognize many ethnic, religious, [and other groups] that could coexist. It would require that power and resources be shared somewhat equitably across those groups. (Gollnick & Chinn, 1998, p.17)

However, the tone of acknowledging pluralism in schooling from this perspective always reflects a dominant power holder's perspective -- as in the need for compensatory help from the "dominant" society -- such as "We need to respect other groups' right to coexist with us and do this (whatever "this" happens to be at the moment) for them so that we can live together more equitably." In contrast, Bhabba and Parekh (1989) advocates that schooling avoid such superficial pluralism resulting from a notion of multiculturalism structured in dominance:

> Multiculturalism doesn't simply mean numerical plurality of different cultures, but rather a community which is creating, guaranteeing, encouraging spaces within which different communities are able to grow at their own pace. At the same time it means creating a public space in which these communities are able to interact, enrich the existing culture and create a new consensual culture in which they recognize reflections of their own identity (Bhabha & Parekh, 1989, cited in Giroux, 1997, p,247).

Giroux believes that teacher education programs should nurture future teachers' pedagogical practices that will allow them to:

> offer the possibility for schools to become places where students and teachers can become border crossers engaged in critical and ethical reflection about what it means to bring a wider variety of cultures into dialogue with each other, to theorize about cultures in the plural, within rather than outside antagonistic relations of domination and subordination. (Giroux, 1997, p.247)

This pluralistic orientation works to unsettle many of schooling's overly-simplistic practices, like "one-size-fits-all" curriculum packages, the one-shot-deal-based "traveler approach" to professional development for teachers, and the celebratory subject approach to diversity (e.g., Black History Month, Women's History Month, Study of China, Study of Native Indian, etc.).

No matter how well these group-oriented practices have succeeded in moving us toward schooling that serves a multicultural, pluralistic human society, we still face almost the same struggles in maintaining an equal, fair, and culturally congruent schooling environment for all students. We still count the number of Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, and Asians in each classroom, the number of ESOL (English Speakers of Other Language) children, children with special needs, children who receive free lunch, and on and on. And while a good deal of this "counting" helps the institution provide various forms of support for students and teachers, it both creates and maintains the grouping orientation in the minds and practices of education professionals. Much worse, however, it helps to reinforce group stereotyping and promotes a kind of institutionalized patronization while it maintains the very power differential (i.e., dominance over students in general, and certain groups of students in particular) which the grouping orientation seeks to disrupt. This grouping framework seldom allows teachers or schools to see and acknowledge diverse children's unique capabilities and differences, nor can it accept the individual ways children share and learn from each other, building self-identity while learning to appreciate and experiment with the identities of others.

In sum, the important and increasingly popular group orientation to education that is multicultural is limited in terms of helping children develop an wholistic intellectual framework for realizing positive self-identity and developing an eventual repertoire of other identities which underlie the dynamic nature of a human organism. The way we attempt to critically look at "multiculturalism" is somewhat similar to and may seem support the latest notions of "critical multiculturalism" (Demaine, 2000; May, 1999), or "critical revolutionary multiculturalism" (Hytten, 1999; McLaren, 1997), or "critical postmodern spatial theory" (Allen, 1999). They, however, speak the issue of "education" in a highly superficial fashion with a full of jargons. Their discussion regarding the limits of the "old" notion of multiculturalism do not convey critically transformed notion of contemporary multiculturalism respond to the education and care for young children who are living, growing, and changing in the multiple, multiethnic, multidimensional, and multidirectional social cultural contexts.

Research Inquiry

Based on the above discussion, several critical questions were emerged. Guiding questions for this paper were;

- How does contemporary "culture" affect/influence young children's learning, growth, and change ("development")?
- What is adult's role in the process?
- In what ways do children receive equal, fair and congruent responses from adults?
- In what ways does adults' influences empower each child's and family's unique identity (linguistic, ethnic, physical, sexual, social, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, aesthetic, etc)?

Methodological framework

Theoretical frameworks, which guide the entire research activities including setting up research question, forming research method, collecting data, and analyzing data, were ethnography and heuristics perspective. Ethnography perspective allowed me to look at the phenomena of "what is the culture of this people/family/child learning/group?" Heuristics perspective continuously informed me of "what is my (researcher) experience of this phenomenon and the essential experience of others who also experience this phenomenon intensely/directly?

Conceptual frameworks, which guide the interpretation of data and results in conjunction with current and preexisting knowledge, were Developmentally and Culturally appropriate Practice (DCAP), Postmodernism, Cultural Pluralism, Critical Pedagogy, and Emancipatory Knowledge. Further discussion of these conceptual frameworks presented as the paper presents findings and discussions in the next sections in the paper.

Data collection and analysis: Over the last 13 years, people's stories (vignettes) were collected from naturalistic observations at variety settings in different states (CA, NV, LA, IL, NY, NH, PA, & FL). The variety naturalistic settings were people's home, public libraries, buses, trains, airplanes, restaurants, bookstores, post offices, malls, parks, movie theaters, museums, streets, day care centers, play grounds, public schools, gas stations, college classes etc. Five vignettes are introduced in this paper. Pseudonyms are used for each vignette. Researcher's heuristic field notes and artifacts are collected. Straus and Cobin's (1990) open, axial, and selective corning was used for data analysis to find a pattern from the data. Among the data, vignettes with rich ethnographic contextual information and researcher's in-depth heuristics

reflection were analyzed from the perspectives of DCAP, Postmodernism, Cultural Pluralism, Critical Pedagogy, and Emancipatory Knowledge.

Findings & Discussion: Cultural Complexity in the Lives of Young Children

In contemporary U.S. culture, young children are not only oriented by their own multiple cultures (racial, ethnic, age, gender, and family to name several) but by living and learning within a socio-culturally conditioned world filled with many different conditions of cultural difference. The following vignettes serve to illustrate these points.

[Story of Yoko]

> *Eight-month old Yoko wears cotton diapers at home. When she goes to day care she wears disposable diapers. Yoko appears to sense the different diapers and has learned that she can use both kinds. At home, Yoko's Japanese-American mother holds Yoko on her back. Her Native-American grandmother holds Yoko on her sides as well as on her back. At day care, Yoko's "American" teacher holds Yoko on her stomach. Yoko's young world is an already complex one which permits her to feel differently in different places, see things from different vantage points, and listen to at least three different linguistic patterns as she grows (September 1988, LA, CA.).*

[Story of Tony and Jane]

> *Five-year old Jane visited Tony's home. There, Jane watched Tony use chopsticks to eat chicken nugget and carrots. Tony's mom gave Jane a fork as well as a set of chopsticks, but Jane used her fingers when she ate her chicken nugget. Tony said to Jane, "At my home I use chopsticks for food. I don't use my fingers. But at school I use a fork or my fingers." Tony showed Jane how to use chopsticks, and later she*

asked Tony's mom if she could take the chopsticks home. "They are hard to use, but they are fun to use, too. And, I know how to use them now. I like to use them." At their full day kindergarten, Tony and Jane asked the teacher if they could use chopsticks when they ate lunch. Tony's mother brought a box of plastic chopsticks as well as a box of bamboo chopsticks for the children. Tony and Jane demonstrated how to use chopsticks for the other children. Afterward, the children could then use chopsticks, silverware, and their fingers when having their meals at school (February1995, State College, PA).

[Story of Syler]

When Syler, who is African-American, was 5-years-old, he and his two fathers attended "story time" every Saturday at their local library. One day, an old-man storyteller read a book titled "Between Earth & Sky: Legends of Native American Sacred Places" (Bruchac & Locker, 1996). syler loved the story so much that since then, he preferred to be called "Little Bear" like the main character in the story. From the same story Syler and his fathers learned about seven directions: North, South, East, West, Earth, Sky, and the seventh direction. Though difficult to see, this is the direction within us all, the place that helps us see right and wrong and maintain balance in life by choosing to live in a good way. Two years later, when Syler was in second grade, his class was learning about directions. The teacher and the textbook only talked about the four directions (North, South, East, and West) and Syler disagreed, explaining to his teacher and classmates that there are three other directions that he knew about: Earth, Sky, and the judging of right and wrong. The teacher answered, " Syler we are learning about North, South, East, and West. These are the main directions we need to learn. Puzzled, Syler and his father Jeffrey went to the local library and checked out the book they remembered so well. The next day, Syler took the book to school and asked the teacher whether he and his father

Jeffrey could read the book together to the class (because there were some big words in the book that Syler couldn't read yet by himself, he needed his fathers' help). The following day Syler and his father Jeffrey read the book together to the class. Syler's classmates and teacher listened to the story and learned of seven directions. Later, they changed the bulletin board as children decorated three new directions to go with the previous four. Later, the children talked about not only which directions Christopher Columbus took to get to North America but also which direction should they take to make good decision for keeping peace on Earth and in their classroom (November 1999, Fort Myers, FL).

[Story of Newly]

Newly's Haitian family lives in a migrant farm-worker's community. Due to their extremely limited income, two other families (12 people in all) live at the Newly's very old trailer home, which has one toilet, a sink, a stove, two small rooms, and a TV. Five-year old Newly goes to a non-profit community day care each day from 7:30 a.m.- 5:30 p.m. There, some of her friends who have lighter-colored skin than Newly's speak "English" (which Newly is familiar with because of her favorite TV program, "Barney") while other friends with skin colored closer to hers speak Spanish or Creole (Haitian language) or "Black English" (Ebonics). Newly's teachers at the day care all speak "English" and "Spanish" or "Creole." Newly and her friends have learned that, for example, "Thank you," "Gracias," and "Mèsi" have the same meaning. Newly and most of her friends have also learned when and what kinds of languages and words to use, and they count numbers in the three different languages. Watching a TV program on The Learning Channel, they observe "many different looking children" on the TV screen count numbers in other, unfamiliar languages. But after watching the program often, they soon know how to count numbers in "Swahili" as well as "Japanese." One day, Newly was listening to her

parents and teacher talking about her next year at kindergarten in the public school. Suddenly, Newly asked her teacher, "Why do I have to use only English at the big school?" Why does the big school teach only English? I know more than English. I also see many people speak differently on TV, and I know what they are saying. We can say and write words in many ways. Look at this book! The iguana brothers speak in English and Spanish in this book ("The Iguana Brothers," written by Tony Johnston, illustrated by Mark Trague, 1995). It's my favorite! In the computer center I also play games with English and Spanish words when I read stories. I know them (April 1999, Immokalee, FL).

[Story of Jake]

Eight-year-old Jake likes to play with computers. Recently, his family got a new computer and, with his parents' supervision, Jake has learned how to find certain Internet web sites. One Saturday morning he watched a TV cartoon called "Pokeman." He liked it very much. He remembered that many of his school friends play "Pokeman" with "Gameboy" and play with "Pokeman" cards. Later that day he turned on the computer and searched for information about "Pokeman." He learned much about "Pokeman," including the fact that a "Pokeman League with Pokeman cards" gathered every Saturday in a local book store. When Jake went there with his parents, he played with many other kids -- some younger, some older, and some the same age as him, some using wheelchairs or hearing aids, some African-American, Asian-American, and Hispanic-American kids, and a girl with two moms! "I am going to attend every Saturday for the league," he announced later. "It's a cool game. I thought those kids were different than me. I see them at my school but I don't play with them much. I thought I could never be friend with any of them. But they are all same as me. I played with most of them! I also thought girls didn't not like to play "Pokeman," but the girl I played with and her mom knew almost every

"Pokeman" name. They are cool too. (Later, Jake said to his parents, "I think she has two moms. I noticed that she was calling both of them "mom Jenny" and "mom Susan.") I also saw "Pokeman" cards written in other languages, which I did not know it before. But we still played with those. Somehow we learned about each card's information when we played together. It was like magic. I am going back next week"(January 1999, Fort Myers, FL).

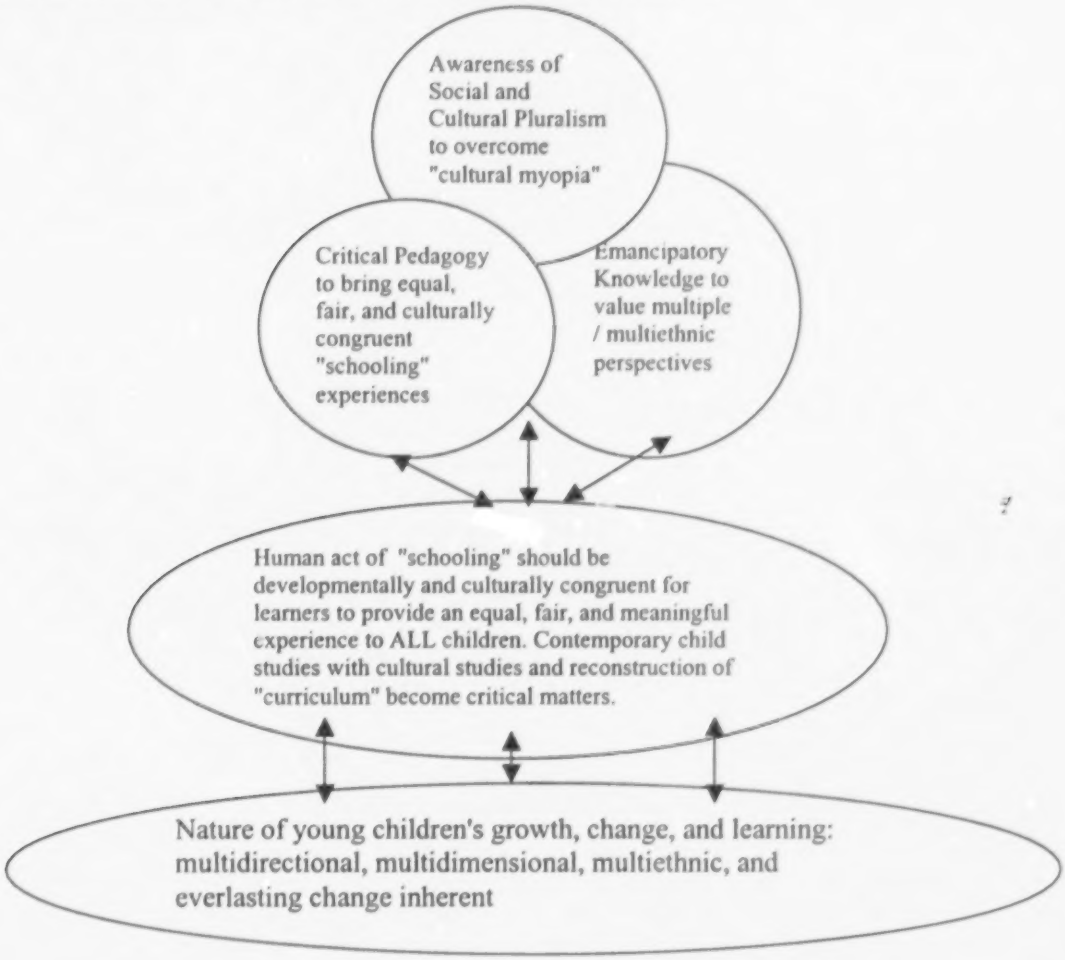
"Multiculturalism" and "multi-ethnicity" have become the words we use to describe young children's identities in contemporary U.S. society. Yet young children can no longer be seen as having a single ethnic identity (e.g., Mexican-American). Our predominant, group-oriented view of multiculturalism (wherein an everlasting power struggle exists) no longer provides us with a congruent intellectual framework for appreciating young children's current and future living and learning situations. As illustrated in the above vignettes, if we simply support and carefully observe young children's lives we may realize that they tend to exhibit a capability of deconstructing power issues in a peaceful and empowering fashion. Even when there is a power struggle, children's meaningful social interaction tends to un-do or prevent further power struggles. Young children construct fairly "equal" perceptions of each other. When they learn new knowledge they tend to gather information without a value judgment (e.g., chopsticks are not funny or a strange things, but simply different tools for the same purpose of eating food). Even when children seem to hold unfair social perceptions of others (Jake's case--they looked different and he didn't know about them, therefore he didn't play with them), they have an intellectual capacity for un-doing their pre-existing unfair perceptions through personally meaningful experiences with others.

By observing these young children's contemporary multi-identity learning experiences we can see that we have been creating complex conflicts and socio-cultural discomforts regarding young children by excessively and inappropriately imposing overly-narrow child development theory, social rules, and socio-cultural values wrapped within a kind of ethnically-singular (i.e., grouping) multicultural focus when it comes to children's schooling. Under the name of education we are limiting and perhaps damaging their human potential. Thus, how we come to understand "multiculturalism" becomes an ethical issue when we talk about schooling for all young children.

Re-conceptualizing Cultural Complexity for Early Childhood Education and Curriculum

The time has come to push beyond the popular group orientation to "education that is multicultural" and search for what is obviously missing in our ever-changing, multiple understandings of human dynamics within the self (individual) as an ecological organism (see, for example, Diamond & Hopson, 1998; Gardner, 1999; Pearce, 1977; Shore, 1996, 1997). We need to respond to the multicultural/multiethnic perspectives that exist during every moment in every classroom when it comes to young individual children's developmental growth and change. We need to recognize the numerous cultural identities shaped by everything from broad, socio-cultural influences to unique family circumstances. Figure 1 briefly illustrates re-conceptualizing cultural complexity for early childhood education.

Figure 1: Cultural Complexity in Early Childhood Education


Awareness of Social and Cultural Pluralism to overcome "cultural myopia"
Critical Pedagogy to bring equal, fair, and culturally congruent "schooling" experiences
Emancipatory Knowledge to value multiple / multiethnic perspectives
Human act of "schooling" should be developmentally and culturally congruent for learners to provide an equal, fair, and meaningful experience to ALL children. Contemporary child studies with cultural studies and reconstruction of "curriculum" become critical matters.
Nature of young children's growth, change, and learning: multidirectional, multidimensional, multiethnic, and everlasting change inherent

As illustrated in the earlier vignettes, due to diverse socio-cultural environments, the nature of young children's developmental growth, change, and learning is:

- multidirectional (Eight-month old Yoko views things from multi-directions, while Jane, Tony, and their friends use multiple resources for a specific purpose);
- multidimensional (Tyler sees directions from the seven multiple-dimensions);
- multiethnic (Newly learns diverse ethnic linguistic codes as naturalistic human interaction); and
- everlasting (Jake finds himself changing through interaction with other children).

The nature of contemporary young children's lives make a compelling case for the reconsideration and de-construction of pre-existing notions of the group perspective toward multiculturalism. The time has come to re-evaluate the current power struggle that pervades schooling for young children, to re-think how we understand diverse young children's growth, learning and developmental change, and to re-configure curriculum that is developmentally and culturally congruent in an effort to respond to young children's complex lives and to provide equal, fair, and culturally empowering schooling experiences to them all (Hyun & Marshall, in press a; Hyun & Marshall, in press b; Hyun & Marshall, in review).

To accomplish this, curriculum must have multidirectional, multidimensional, and multiethnic capacities. The past several decades have produced in educators a keen awareness of social and cultural pluralism, emancipatory knowledge, and critical pedagogy which combine to form a foundation for that kind of curriculum construction (see, for example, Delpit, 1995; Giroux, 1997; Lather, 1991; Mclaren, 1997; Slattery, 1995), yet few have attempted to relate that foundation to early childhood education. There remains a social perception among many early childhood practitioners that these ideas are too "big" and the concepts difficult to understand. This perception has prevented early childhood professionals from exploring multidirectional, multidimensional, and multiethnic early childhood curriculum. In order to move closer toward equal, fair, and culturally congruent schooling experiences for young children we will have to engage these complex and disturbing notions.

We believe, engaging cultural pluralism begins with one's autobiographical realization of self and family identities (Baker, 1994; Banks, 1994a, 1994b; Hyun, 1998; Kincheloe, 1993; Kumabe, Nishida, & Hepworth, 1985; McAdoo, 1993; Nieto, 1992; Sleeter & Grant, 1999; Stewart & Bennett, 1991). Without awareness and acceptance of one's own multiple

identities, individuals risk failing to perceive and respect the equally genuine and complex cultural differences between oneself and others, a failure which prevents the development of multiple/multiethnic perspective taking abilities (Hyun & Marshall, 1997). The resulting "cultural myopia" severely diminishes democratic practices for pluralistic schooling and curriculum.

Appreciating cultural pluralism leads to the realization that all knowledge results from interpretation that is derived from one's own identities, backgrounds, and experiences. This realization, basic to the pluralistic orientation, leads teachers to value emancipatory knowledge that is constructed by individual learners for themselves, on their own terms, as they act to change their worlds. It is the desire to promote pluralistic emancipatory knowledge like this that guides teachers' critical pedagogy (Giroux, 1997; Lather, 1986; O'Loughlin, 1992).

Critical pedagogy refers to teaching that proceeds from a consideration of diverse students' everyday lives and experiences (Giroux & Simon, 1989; McLaren, 1997) rather than from an imposed cultural canon (Nieto, 1992). Critical pedagogy reflects teachers' thinking and action that goes beyond those commonsense assumptions shaped by one's own singular world view. Because taken-for-granted commonsense assumptions cannot lead to congruent schooling experiences for all children (e.g., not all children keep eye contact when they talk to the teacher; not all children agree that there are only 4 directions when they look at the world), critical pedagogy demands an ethical questioning of one's own practices with respect to how they might best serve every student. Teachers practicing critical pedagogy continuously try to learn about and question their own beliefs and practices and to escape from the cultural myopia which society promotes, understanding that "you become what you are in the context of what others made of you" (Giroux, 1997, p. 27). This critical recognition serves to guide all decisions

about what to teach, how to teach, and how to interpret learner's self-growth.

An early childhood teacher who strives to practice critical pedagogy believes that learning depends on children's using and questioning what they already know in the service of creating new ideas, skills, and dispositions. When unwilling or unable to evoke what children already know to inform their work, teachers imperil the teaching/learning process, making developmentally and culturally congruent equal and fair schooling experiences impossible. As Syler's story suggests, when teachers assume that mainstream behavior is "normal" and that the behavior of other groups is deviant or deficient, they are apt to ignore the wholistic cognitive structures children already have, to misread children's abilities, to mis-design or maintain a limiting curriculum. In other words, schooling's power struggle remains in tact (Bowman, 1994) unless learners and teachers decide to solve the conflict by being socially and intellectually proactive about their limits.

By understanding the cultural complexity of young children's lives and realizing the importance of socio-cultural pluralism, emancipatory knowledge construction and critical pedagogy, a new developmentally and culturally congruent intellectual framework may emerge that allows educators to appreciate that all young children are:

- experiencing multidirectional, multidimensional, multiethnic developmental growth and change;
- constructing unique ways of knowing based on the ways they perceive the world within the cultures they encounter;
- facing continuous, new social-cultural changes as they grow; and
- living in family structures, cycles, and environments that are dynamic and changeable.

From this vantage point, classrooms are always filled with students representing multiple/multiethnic perspectives reflecting their individual dynamic ecological and biological changes as well as their unique multi-ethnic daily experiences. In order to provide an equal,

fair, and developmentally and culturally empowering learning environment for these students, early childhood curriculum must become multidimensional. How to construct this multidimensional curriculum for developmentally and culturally appropriate practice (DCAP) with young children becomes, therefore, a critical matter.

Lived Curriculum

In early childhood education, curriculum has never been critically articulated between what curriculum could be [IS] and what curriculum could do [DOES]. Rather, it has been typically used for teachers' general sense of how they operate their daily classroom with what kind of "learning" experiences including national/state standards, physical arrangements and materials (appropriate vs. inappropriate) (Bredekamp 1987; Bredekamp & Coople, 1997; Epstein, Schweinhart, & McAdoo, 1996; Seefeldt, 1999). In many cases,--due to the long history of influences from developmental psychology (see Cannella, 1998)--when the teachers talk about their curriculum formally, they typically talk about the importance of observation and assessment. However, the importance of observation never connected to critical awareness of contemporary child studies with cultural studies (Cannella & Viruru, 1999, see endnote 1), assessment is usually focus on child's (only) cognitive function and the developmental progress (e.g., Martin, 1994). In almost every case, the notion of early childhood curriculum always refers to (IS) an educational system that combines theory with practice and a series of national subject-based standards (e.g., Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992, 1995; Seefeldt, 1999), and curriculum is defined as a organized framework, and assessment is an accompanying set of the curriculum practice (e.g., Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1995, p. 16; Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992, p.10)

Many cases "respected" curricula are that have specific goals, strategies to accomplish the goals and objectives, specific assessment tools/frameworks for the objectives, and teacher

training program for mastering the strategies as well as the assessment skills (Epstein, Schweinhart, McAdoo, 1996). This means that many U.S. early childhood curricula reflect Tylerian rationale (Tyler, 1949): what educational purposes should the school seek to attain (what are its "ends" or goals or objectives)?; how can learning experiences be selected that are likely to be useful in attaining these objectives (lesson plans)?; how can meaningful learning experiences be organized for effective instruction (scope and sequence guides)?; and how can the effectiveness of learning experiences be evaluated (tests)? (e.g., The Florida Sunshine State Standards - http://www.firn.edu/doe/menu/sss.htm). Somehow, the preexisting curricula understandings represent that curriculum depends upon single power holder's manifestation of one's own thinking of teaching--*Since we have an responsibility (authority) to teach them, we need to figure out how to teach, what to teach, how to evaluate them properly.* In this line of thinking, curriculum serves for teacher's practices on "what to teach" and "how to teach," less serves for teachers' meaning-making for their professional life (e.g., autobiographical journey of teaching), nor serves for learner's emerging journey of learning that is based on social-emotionally, culturally, and intellectually (wholistic) congruent self-exploratory learning experiences. These assumptions rarely promote critical thinking, critical pedagogy, pluralism or emancipatory knowledge construction. In the field of early childhood education, we have a long overdue de-constructing Tylerian curriculum orientation, and re-conceptualize and new-construct the notion of lived curriculum.

Can curriculum be a *conscious* framework that guides teachers' ethical, critical and reflective thinking and action for all young children's meaningful "schooling" experience? Can curriculum be (IS) a *conscious* framework that allows the teachers to carefully and continuously deal with and go beyond the preexisting "knowledge base" delivery? The curriculum framework

that has a capacity of continuously promoting (so, DOES) teacher's "wide-awakenness"(Greene, 1978) and self-monitoring of their decision making to provide diverse opportunities to all individual child to explore: what his/her own unique human potentials are; what she/her wants to learn; how he/she wants to learn; how and what she/he makes meaning; how he/she wants to use one's own "knowing" and "knowledge" for own and others' on-going life-long learning experiences in an interdependent learning community? Thus, *curriculum can be [IS]* a *conscious* framework that allows teachers to be a awakened and *caring* multiple perspective-takers in young children's "schooling" experience. At the same time, the *conscious* curriculum can do [*DOES]* serve as a safe boundary for all young children: to explore their personal and/or social journey of meaning-making; and to celebrate their unique socio-emotional, physical, ethnic, intellectual, and linguistic characteristics as young human beings and continuously explore their curiosities, thereafter they expand their multidirectional, multidimensional, and multiethnic developmental growth, change, and learning.

As described in the stories of Syler, Newly, Jane, Kevin, and Tony in the previous chapters, teachers always face unexpected situations initiated by learners. In order for teachers to maintain developmentally and culturally congruent (i.e., responsive) curriculum for young children they must have a conscious awareness of their own multiple identities (ethnic, linguistic, cultural, gender, socio-economic, etc.) along with a willingness and ability to "step back" and critically re-examine their own interpretations of the identities of the children they teach. In Syler's case, for example, they might ask:

What makes Syler believe that there are more than the four directions-- North, South, East, and West? Why do we (Syler and me) have different views of such an obvious 'fact'? What does Syler know that I don't?

Further, teachers would analyze the nature of children's expressions from the individual child's perspective. Returning to Syler's example, the teacher might ask:

If I were Syler, what would I expect from my teacher at this moment, and how might I try to have her respect my knowledge?

Third, teachers would realize the need to make changes and re-adjust the curriculum and their related practices -- a habit of reflection Kincheloe, Slattery, and Steinberg (2000, p.70) call "spiritual dynamics" which spiritually intensifies conscious-aliveness and delineates the purpose of true "teaching" as living. At this point, Syler's teacher might think:

As I read the book Syler brought I have realized that I am unconsciously limiting my students' learning experiences. Syler's voice allows other children and me to learn more than our "already-known-knowledge." Sharing his story with us will give him a congruent and powerful personal learning experience (individual) and give us a broader understanding of our world experiences for everyone in the class (social).

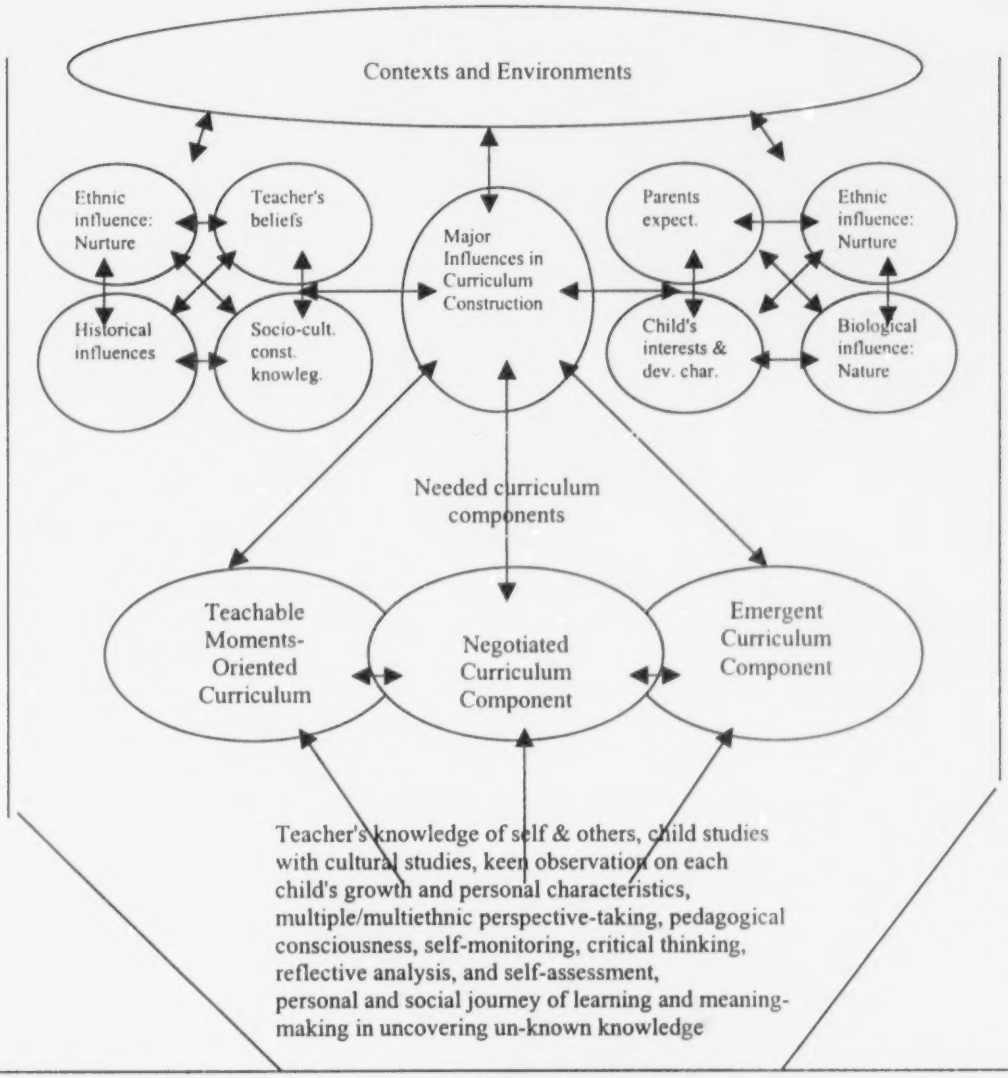
Teachers who encourage and permit children to change the curriculum always nurture students' learning and meaning-making (Greene, 1978; Kincheloe, Slattery, & Steinberg, 2000). Thus in the notion of lived curriculum, curriculum requires teachers' conscious awareness and willingness to change in an effort to promote learners' active and relevant personal and social meaning-making experiences. These teachers continuously realize that their knowledge is always incomplete and that they, too, are participating in a continuous journey of learning with the children. The pre-planned, scope-and-sequence oriented curriculum representing a set of intended learning outcomes produced by others can never be a lived curriculum for young children living in a multidirectional, multidimensional, and multiethnic socio-cultural world. Therefore, teachers conscious of curriculum are in the habit of asking situational questions as a lived curriculum practice to maintain personal and social journey of living:

- How do I know whether this is a real learnable moment that I take as teachable moment for the child(ren)? (Teachable Moment-Oriented Curriculum)
- How do I know that this is the real emergent interests the child(ren) wants to learn and that would also lead him/her/them to move to further meaningful experiences as an autonomous learner? (Emergent Curriculum)
- How do I know that the way I negotiate with what I want to (or "have to") teach them and what they want to learn about are fairly balanced in my daily practices? How can I be sure that the "how" of "have-to-teach" will also come from negotiating with the children's personal/social and critical meaning-making process? (Negotiated curriculum)

For such teachers, critical self-monitoring (wide-awakeness) of the curriculum is on-going and inherent. Teachers' sense-making of "what to teach" and "how to teach" for appropriate practice

is not single or scope-and-sequence oriented. Instead, it is more likely a lived curriculum that is more based on: 1) individual child base developmental characteristics and her/his own interests accordingly (a teachable moment oriented curriculum); 2) children's situated self-expression and various forms of intellectual culture (an emergent curriculum); and 3) shared-power between children and teacher in learning (a negotiated curriculum) (See figure 2).

Figure 2: Lived Curriculum Understanding


Contexts and Environments
Ethnic influence: Nurture
Teacher's beliefs
Historical influences
Socio-cult. const. knowleg.
Major Influences in Curriculum Construction
Parents expect.
Ethnic influence: Nurture
Child's interests & dev. char.
Biological influence: Nature
Needed curriculum components
Teachable Moments-Oriented Curriculum
Negotiated Curriculum Component
Emergent Curriculum Component
Teacher's knowledge of self & others, child studies with cultural studies, keen observation on each child's growth and personal characteristics, multiple/multiethnic perspective-taking, pedagogical consciousness, self-monitoring, critical thinking, reflective analysis, and self-assessment, personal and social journey of learning and meaning-making in uncovering un-known knowledge

Lived curricula understanding

Curriculum can be [IS]: A conscious framework that allows teachers to be wide-awakened practitioners with critical thinking
and multiple perspective taking. & An ever-changing conscious institutional capacity and a social-cultural intention that is designed to provide diverse opportunities to ALL individual children to explore their lives.
Curriculum can do [DOES]: Provide a safe boundary for All children's personal and social journey of meaning-making. In the meaning-making process they don't cover a subject, but do uncover un-known knowledge, therefore their multidimensional, multidirectional, and multiethnic developmental growth and change continue.
DCAP lived curriculum has a conscious framework of:

- Teachable moment-oriented curriculum (Maintaining teachable moments that belong to learner's learnable moment-oriented experiences)
- Emergent curriculum (Responding to ALL individual child's emerging interests)
- Negotiated curriculum (Promoting shared-power decisions and negotiations in learning and teaching).

Conclusion

In a contemporary postmodern orientation, people perceive that we cannot continue as we have been (Lather, 1991, Constas, 1998, Giroux, 1997). We have realized that we cannot continually practice the conventional curriculum notion, such as scope-and-sequence oriented curriculum or "developmental" base curriculum . The key question that we share in postmodernism is: What are the contemporary social, political, and cultural conditions under which a human act takes place, that support a person's capability to deconstruct, reconstruct, and interpret new meanings ("new-construction") of the act in a recursive manner? Postmodernism not only challenges the form and content of dominant models of knowledge and curriculum, but also attempt to continuously wonder other new forms of knowledge through its emphasis on breaking down disciplines and taking up objects of study that were unrepresentable in the dominant paradigm (Giroux, 1997).

These types of postmodern thoughts influence people to critically revisit and question historical and political influences to curriculum. Clearly we are no longer deeply depend upon the notions such as "curriculum describes what is to be learned or a structured serious of intended learning outcomes", or "curriculum as an accumulated wisdom--'knowledge base"-- to transmit it to the new generation" (i.e., Johnson, 1967, Goodlad & Richter, 1966, Harris, 1897, Hirsch, 1987, Tyler, 1949). As H. Gardner (1989) identifies, assumptions about the knowledge base to the effect that:

> "it is possible to say something at this time about what is known..., knowledge base teaching will never be complete..., the knowledge base for teaching takes a variety of forms and is drawn from many disciplines and other scours..." (p.x).

We no longer pay attention only to curriculum for the development or healthy growth of individual experience (i.e., Dewey, 1938). Rather, the postmodern perspective portrays contemporary curriculum as an ever-changing conscious framework in the pluralistic and interdependent learning-community (e.g., Giroux, 1997; Sears & Marshall, 1990; Slattery, 1995).

The notion of "education that is multicultural" was a social-politically needed movement over the last twenty years as a critical period (as an "infant" period) to move on to "truly" pluralistic educational practices. By acknowledging the historical perspective and witnessing contemporary young children's multiethnic, multidirectional, and multidimensional lives, our postmodern oriented thoughts and practice make us to attempt to bring a different discussion to the field of "schooling," which may help us to construct a lived curriculum experiences to all. In field of early childhood education, understanding of curriculum is still scope-and-sequence oriented, prescribed and predetermined, developmental psychology based, national standards focused, topic focused, and subject segregate static package with a very limited capacity of promoting contemporary children's learning, growth and change. All of these we would call them as resources for dead curricula construction not for lived one. We hope to see this discussion that we have presented in this paper will initiate a new dialogue for a lived curriculum construction in the field of early childhood education.

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Endnote

1. Cultural studies implies examination of (a) multiple constructions of childhood in diverse cultural settings; (b) how these constructions have changed over time and in different contexts; (c) to what extend the constructions are actually related to the lives of the young children; (d) the public policy that has been/is being created based on these constructions, whether through education, human services, or other societal forms of institutionalization; and (e) the influence of "child-based" public policy on individuals, families, and societal groups (Cannella & Viruru, 1999, p.19).